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TEXTS AND STUDIES

*Contributions to
Biblical and Patristic Literature*

THIRD SERIES

Edited by
D. C. PARKER & D. G. K. TAYLOR

Volume 4

**TRANSMISSION AND RECEPTION:
NEW TESTAMENT TEXT-CRITICAL
AND EXEGETICAL STUDIES**

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PREFACE

One of the most intriguing angles of inquiry in contemporary biblical scholarship involves the study of the reception of the biblical text. Like windows, instances of textual reception invite us to peer into them in order to gain fresh insight into the developing stories of Christian communities. The careful observer of such instances will witness the dynamic interplay between the text and human cultures. Even the motivations and experiences of individual past readers of the text may become perceptible. The present volume brings together sixteen original studies addressing various issues related to the past and present reception of the New Testament text, including the fundamental challenge of clarifying the shape of the text itself and understanding the processes of its transmission.

The history of New Testament reception begins with the study of the material evidences for the text. Appreciating this history involves descriptive codicology and the cataloguing of scribal phenomena but ultimately entails more than just explaining the relationship between divergent witnesses and adjudicating between their testimonies in order to identify the most primitive text form. Phenomena occurring within the textual tradition attest to an ongoing dynamic process of the reception of the text as an object of pious devotion, theological reflection, and scholarly research. Ancient manuscripts are not mere repositories of textual data; they reverberate with the echoes of faithful meditation, intellectual discourse, and mighty battles between opposing parties. Manuscript investigations create resonances with contemporary concerns in surprising and often provocative ways. Given this awareness, the distance between the traditional categories of "lower" and "higher" criticisms diminishes or even disappears altogether. As the work of many of the authors featured in this volume shows, the fruits of the researches of textual critics offer insights that are valuable for the interpretation of the biblical text, for patristics, history, and theology.

In the first part of this volume (*Transmission*) some of the world's leading textual critics present new textual data, offer helpful critiques of current methods, and apply the results of their text-critical research to